

Elk General Seasons and Elk Special Permits

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Status of Elk Populations

Elk Herd	Status	Hunting Season Recommendation
Yakima	At Objective	Slight ↑ ↓ for Bull Permits; Slight Decreases in Antlerless Special Permit Opportunity
Colockum	Above Objective; Bull Ratios Below Objective	Increase Antlerless Special Permits and Open General Season Antlerless for Archery
Blue Mountains	At Objective	Status Quo on Bull Permits with some ↑ ↓
Mount St. Helens	At Objective	Pending Survey Flights Reduction in Antlerless to Stabilize
Nooksack	Slightly Below Objective	Status Quo Special Permits
Olympic	Harvest Data	Status Quo
Willapa Hills	Harvest Data (2014, 2015 surveys)	Status Quo
Selkirk	Harvest Data	Status Quo
North Rainier	Harvest Data	Status Quo
South Rainier	Harvest Data	Status Quo

Early Archery

- **For the last 6 years early archery has opened the Tuesday after Labor Day (13 day season)**
- **Motivation for that change stemmed from GMAC**
- **No discernible change in proportions of bulls taken in last 6 years**
- **Hot weather and fire restrictions have proved problematic under current season structure**
- **Recommend starting the season Saturday after Labor Day (13 day season)**

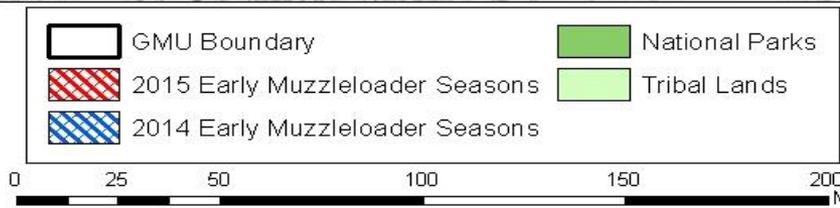
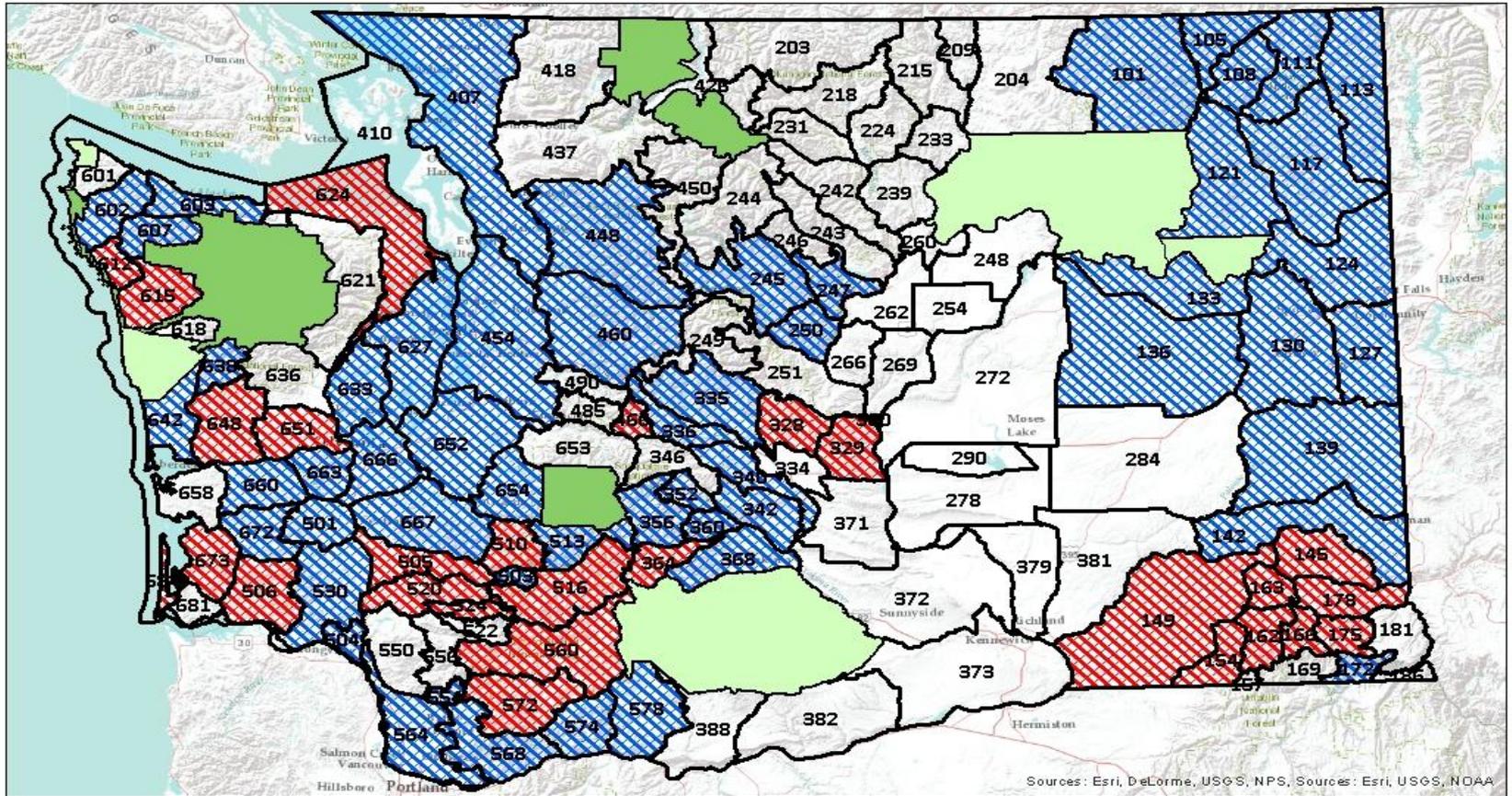


Muzzleloader Elk

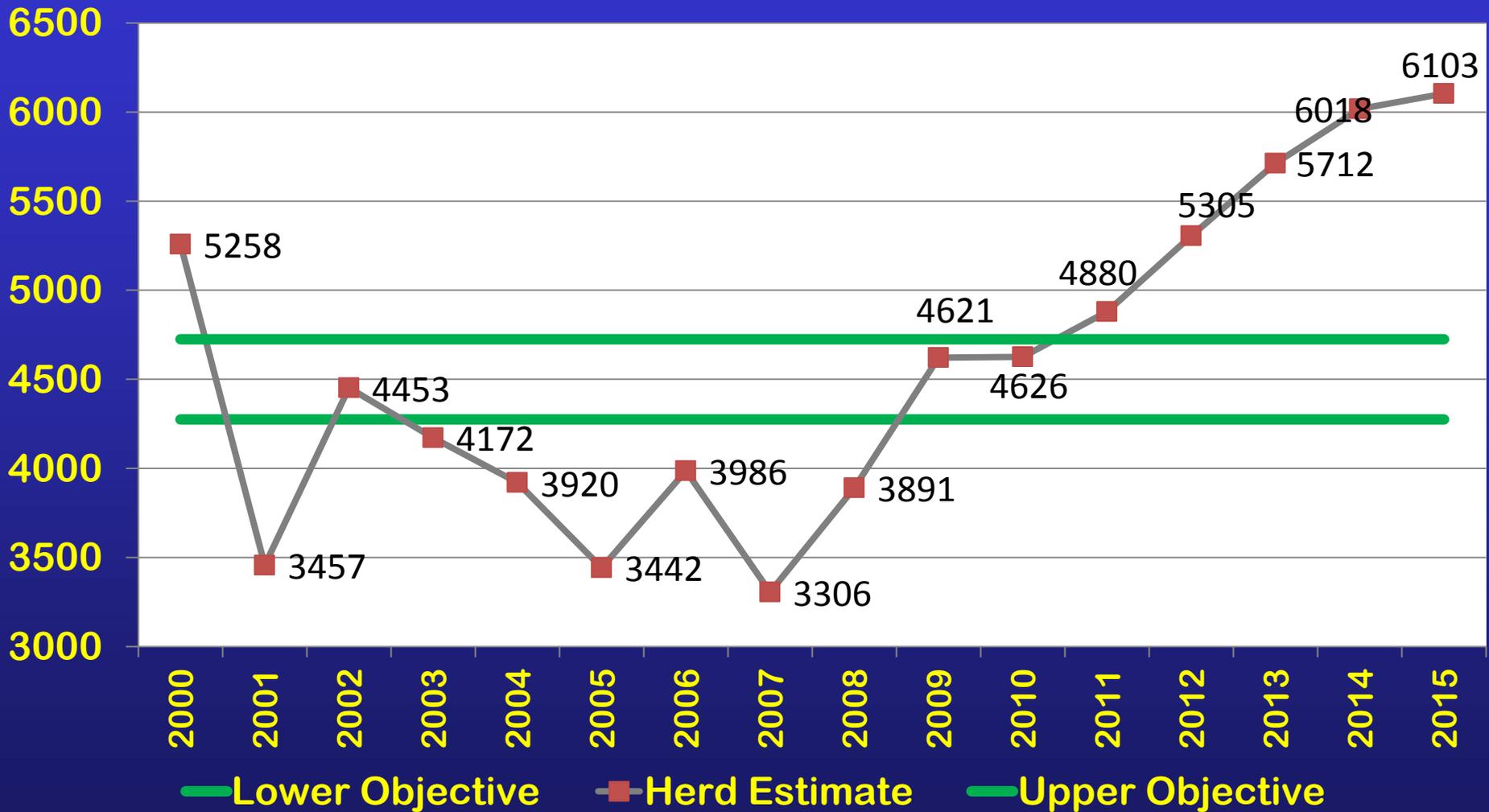
- **There are Currently 50 GMUs Without General Muzzleloader Elk Opportunity**
- **Recommend Opening 27 of Those GMUs to General Muzzleloader Season**
 - **26 early general; 1 late general**



General Muzzleloader Opportunity



Colockum Elk Herd



Colockum Special Permits

HUNT	WEAPON	DATE	GMUs	2014	2015
Antlerless	EF	OCT.-NOV.	328, 329	425	590
Antlerless	EA	SEPT.	328,329,335	475	General Season
Antlerless	EM	OCT.	328, 329	90	130
Youth	EF	Nov.	328,329,335	NA	70
Youth	EM	Oct.	328,329,335	NA	20
65+	EF	Nov.	328,329,335	NA	20
65+	EM	Oct.	328,329,335	NA	5
Hunters with Disabilities	EF, EA, EM	Nov.	328,329,335	NA	20
TOTAL				990	855

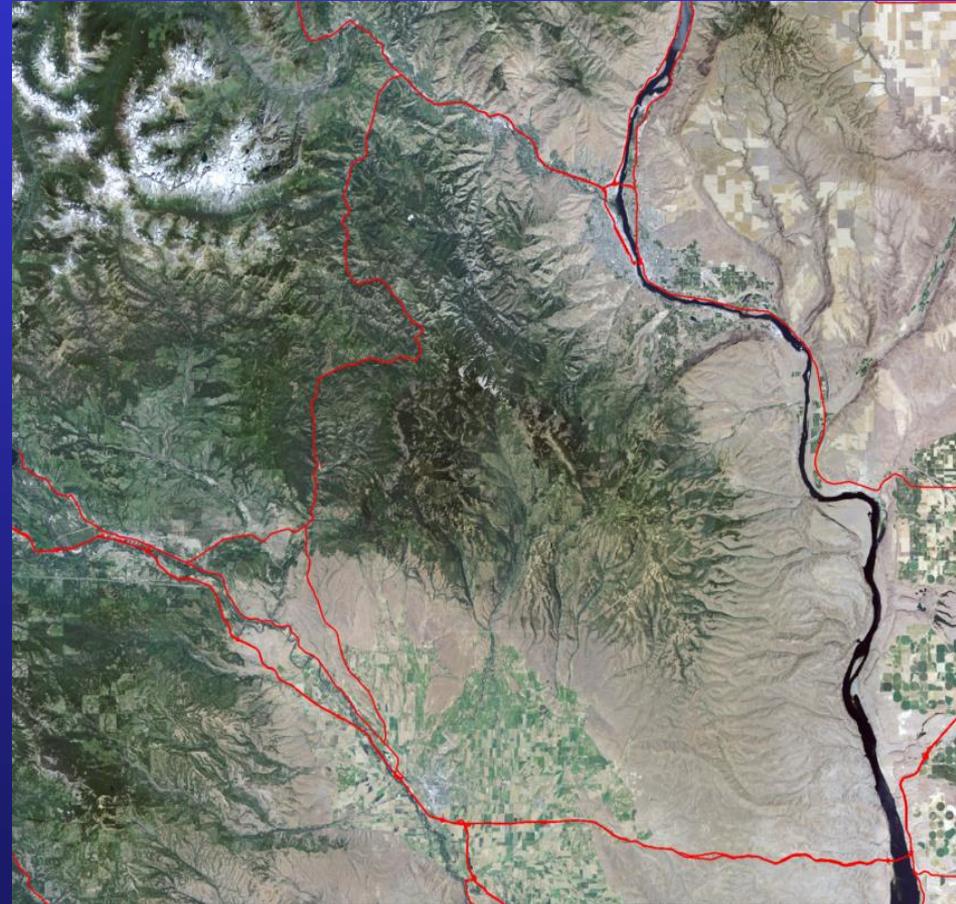
Colockum Bull Study

- **One year left on study**
- **9 mortalities to date**
- **10 collar failures**
- **Currently 18 bulls equipped with GPS radio-collars**
- **Final capture this summer**



Colockum Bull Study

- **Seasonal Distribution of Bulls**
- **Better define the nature of winter sexual segregation**
- **Estimate survival**
- **Seasonal habitat selection**
- **Adjust survey protocols**



Nooksack Elk Special Permits

- **Bull Permits Remain Stable**
- **Antlerless Special Permits in Elk Area 4941 for Youth/Senior/Disabled**
 - **Antlerless Special Permits in Elk Area 4941 Are Intended to Mitigate Elk Damage on the Valley Floor**
- **Additional Damage Resolution Will be Handled by the Wildlife Conflict Section**

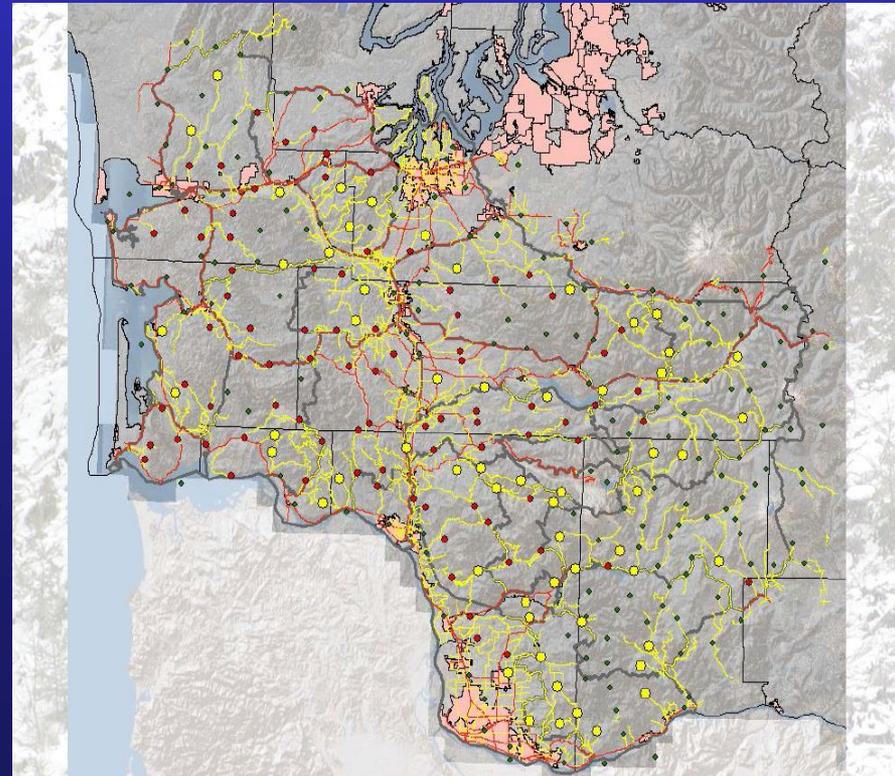
Hoof Disease Update: Diagnostic Effort

HDTAG Consensus on June 3, 2014

- Available evidence is most consistent with an infectious bacterial hoof disease.
- Treponeme-associated hoof disease (TAHD) in elk most resembles contagious ovine digital dermatitis (CODD).
- Environmental factors, including wet conditions, are likely important in disease initiation and propagation.
- Continue to work with collaborators on additional TAHD-related studies.

Hoof Disease Update: Prevalence and Distribution Effort

- **Objective:** Increase our understanding of TAHD prevalence and distribution in the Mount St. Helens and Willapa Hills elk herds.
- Pilot study in August 2014
- Used results from pilot study to develop comprehensive survey effort utilizing citizen-scientists.
 - 300 volunteers
 - 100 on waiting list
 - 190 sampling points across 9 counties
 - Surveys began March 3, 2015 and will continue through April 30, 2015



Hoof Disease Update: Survival and Reproduction Study

- **Goal:** Quantify how TAHD affects the survival, pregnancy rates, productivity, and nutritional condition of adult (≥ 2 yrs old) female elk.
- 4-year study
- Study Area: Core area of Mount St. Helens elk herd
 - GMUs 520, 522, 524, 550, and 556
- Captures initiated in February 2015
 - Radio-collared 77 cow elk (57 had TAHD, 20 control)
 - Assessed pregnancy status, body condition, age, and condition of hooves
- Will conduct calf-at-heel surveys in Aug.
- Will collect organ samples from hunter harvested elk Sep.-Nov.



Elk Season Recommendations

- **Move Early Archery to First Sat. After Labor Day**
- **Open More GMUs to Early Muzzleloader**
- **Open the Margaret Unit (GMU 524) to General Season**
- **Increase Antlerless Opportunity in Colockum Through Special Permits and General Archery**
- **Reduce Antlerless Special Permits for Mount St. Helens and Yakima to Stabilize Population**
- **Adjust $\uparrow\downarrow$ Special Permits via Special Permit Allocation Formula**
- **Adjust Antlerless Special Permits to Address Population Control and/or Agricultural Damage Issues**

Questions

